Failure of PDS

*498. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO:
SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Public Distribution System is a failure and PDS shops remain open only on two or three days in a month; and

(b) the measures taken to eradicate persistent recurrence of hunger and starvation in the particular regions?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) and (b) The management of Fair Price Shops (FPS) for distribution of commodities under the Public Distribution System (PDS), including the regular opening of shops, rests with the State Governments and UT Administrations who have prescribed the days and timings for the same which is also required to be displayed on the Notice Boards of the Fair Price Shops.

In pursuance of the commitment to ensure food security for all and to reform and improve the Public Distribution System (PDS) so as to serve the poorest of the poor, the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) was launched in December, 2000 to provide foodgrains at subsidised rates to one crore AAY families who are the poorest of the poor. The AAY families were provided 25 kg. of foodgrains per family per month@ Rs. 2/- per kg. for wheat and Rs. 3/- per kg. for rice. The scale of issue under the AAY was increased to 35 kg. per family per month with effect from 1st April, 2002.

WLL in Rajasthan

*499. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal for providing WLL system to facilitate expansion of telecom network in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when, WLL system would be made available to the State?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) The Government has issued licences for operation of basic telephone services to two private operators apart from Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in Rajasthan. All operators are free to deploy any technology including Wireless in Local Loop (WLL), for provision of the services to their customers and offer various facilities. Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) provides for faster roll out. According to information available, out of a total of 258, such systems have already been installed in 121 Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs), which are typically Tehsils. At present, the service based on Wireless Local Loop systems is available in 38 SDCAs to the consumers. The systems that have been installed in the balance SDCAs will be commissioned after successful completion of interconnection tests. Further, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has drawn up plans to provide WLL system in 140 SDCAs by 2003-2004. Some of these SDCAs would also be covered by private basic telephone service operators.

(c) As described above, WLL system is already available in several SDCAs of Rajasthan.

Operation of International Gateway at Guwahati

*500. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) when the international gateway for Internet was inaugurated by VSNL at Guwahati;

(b) the hours during which the gateway remained operational till December, 2002 since its inception;

(c) the reasons for interrupted connectivity/non-operation of the gateway and the action taken to rectify the same;

(d) whether this connectivity is still being provided through BSNL's leased optic fibre from Kolkata to Guwahati;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the alternative channel thereof?